



These Trails Depend On You

The Mount Pilchuck NRCA vicinity trail systems are heavily used since they are just a short drive from the Seattle-Everett area. With limited public funding, trails often remain open because of volunteer maintenance efforts. Get involved by contacting:

The Volunteer Trailwork Coalition
1-206-464-1641 or
1-800-650-1641
Or by internet at
vtc@halcyon.com
http://www.halcyon.com/vtc/

For more information about the Mount Pilchuck NRCA, and how you can help protect its resources and recreational opportunities, contact:

**Department of Natural Resources
Northwest Region**
919 N Township St
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284-9395
(360) 856-3500

Emergency! Emergency!

Phone numbers you need to know:
■ **Medical Aid/Sheriff — 911**
■ **Vandalism —1-800-527-3305**
■ **To report Wildfires —**
1-800-562-6010 or 911

Persons needing the information contained in this brochure in an alternate format may call:
(360) 902-1340 or
TTY (360)902-1125



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
Natural Resources

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1998 trail map
Mount Pilchuck NRCA
Trail Systems

Trail
Mount Pilchuck NRCA
Systems

Upper Ashland Lake
Photo by Nancy Barker



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Ashland Lakes Trail

Hikers of all levels will enjoy the Ashland Lakes Trail. Camping and fishing opportunities at all four lakes along the trail make this one of the department's most popular trails in the area. The gradual elevation changes and the boardwalks



Boardwalk on Ashland Lakes Trail
Photo by Nancy Barker

over marshy ground make this a perfect trail for people new to backpacking. Any of the lakes would make a good base camp for exploring the remaining lakes. The dense hemlock forests open up to mountain lakes, the first just 1.5 miles from the trailhead at Beaver Plant Lake. This lake, surrounded by a boardwalk, offers an excellent opportunity to view the seasonal changes of a shallow lake ecosystem. Continue hiking 3/4 mile to upper Ashland Lake, the biggest of the lakes in the chain and the most popular camping spot. Huckleberries are abundant in the fall. Just 1/2 mile further is Lower Ashland Lake, the outlet for the Ashland drainage.

The trail continues to Twin Falls Lake, 1.5 miles past Lower Ashland. Notice the changes going from the dense forest to the more open, broken, granite terrain with more vista points. This is the most difficult portion of the trail, dropping sometimes steeply in elevation. Campers here will fall asleep to the everpresent roar of the falls. We caution hikers at this lake not to go beyond the marked barriers. The cliffs can be very dangerous and the rocks slick when wet. This is not the most suitable camp area for those with young children.

You can help protect this forest and your recreational opportunities if you ...

Remember These Rules

- On the Trails**
- Stay on DNR maintained trails.
 - Respect the rights of others on trails.
 - Watch for hazardous trail conditions.
- In the Campground**
- Camp in designated campsites only.
 - Do not alter or remove vegetation.
 - Pack out garbage and litter.
 - Limit fires to steel campsite fireplaces.
 - Maintain quiet between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Bald Mountain Ridge Trail

Backpackers looking for more of a challenge can try the 8.5 mile Bald Mountain Ridge Trail just past Beaver Plant Lake. This lightly used trail ends at Cutthroat Lakes. It also offers spectacular views of other lakes in the area, including Spada Lake, the reservoir for Snohomish County's drinking water.

The trail climbs through open forests to the ridge above treeline. Hikers will leave the damp, sheltered lowlands for exposed rocky outcrops. Trails may be difficult to follow through the many sections of loose rock (talus). Water is scarce on the ridge. The last chance to get water is near the headwaters of the Pilchuck River, so pack in enough for the hike. Always treat locally gathered water before consuming it.

Campers at Cutthroat Lakes can enjoy huckleberries in the fall. The fish are wise, but can occasionally be persuaded to bite on a fly. The more adventurous can scramble to the top of nearby Bald Mountain for a stunning panoramic view.

Hikers can make the ridge a one way, 14.5 mile hike by leaving one vehicle at the Ashland Lakes Trailhead and one at the Walt Bailey Trailhead.

Mount Pilchuck Natural Resources Conservation Area

The Bald Mountain Ridge, Ashland Lakes and Walt Bailey Trails are within the recently established 5600-acre Mount Pilchuck Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCA). The trail system is located about 50 miles northeast of Seattle, just north of Spada Lake in the Sultan River watershed. It can be reached via State Highway 92 near Granite Falls. Mount Pilchuck NRCA is open for hiking, camping and fishing. Motorized vehicles are not allowed.

Protecting unique natural features

The Department of Natural Resources manages more than 50,000 acres of state land on 24 sites as NRCA's. These lands are established for their outstanding ecological and scenic values. Special features found on conservation areas include: coastal and high elevation forests, scenic vistas, rocky headlands, active bald eagle nests, unique plant communities, and some of the oldest geology in the state. The NRCA designation provides:



- Protection for habitat of threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant and animal species
- Opportunities for environmental education
- Opportunities for low impact recreation

Public use is allowed only where it will not negatively affect the area's protected resources. Conservation areas are acquired through gift or purchase from willing land owners. The majority of current sites were formerly school trust lands with unique conservation values. They were purchased with funds appropriated by the Washington State legislature.

Walt Bailey Trail

The Walt Bailey Trail brings the beauty and magic of the Cutthroat Lakes to dayhikers. Started in 1986, this trail has been pioneered and constructed through the volunteer efforts of its namesake, Walt Bailey. Walt gained the approval from the DNR and the US Forest Service to locate the trail, and has worked tirelessly since then recruiting and organizing volunteer groups to make the trail a reality.



Volunteer Work Party
Photo by Nancy Barker

The trail begins along an old road, enters the forest, and climbs beyond the subalpine meadows to the



Meadows on Walt Bailey Trail
Photo by Nancy Barker

garden-like Cutthroat Lakes. Gaining approximately 2000 feet in 4.5 miles, the trail will challenge beginners. Each challenge rewards those who press on with another meadow or vista.

This is a unique opportunity to experience a wilderness environment close to home. As you will notice immediately, the plants throughout the many meadows and woodlands along-side the trail are fragile and do not repair easily. Ensure that the beauty remains unchanged for your next trip. Please stay on the trail and encourage others to do the same.